

Theresa Rice

From: Roz Lassoﬀ on behalf of Council
Sent: Wednesday, June 20, 2012 2:01 PM
To: Theresa Rice
Subject: FW: SMP BUFFER SCIENCE
Attachments: SMP Testimony 6_20_12.docx

Roz Lassoﬀ
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From: Don Bennett [<mailto:chron2@comcast.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, June 20, 2012 2:00 PM
To: Council
Subject: SMP BUFFER SCIENCE

Dear BI City Council,
I intend to make some comments at the SMP meeting this evening. For your record, please find attached a summary of some of my thoughts.
Sincerely,
Don Bennett
3230 Point White Drive NE

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My comments are about the use of the words "*best available science*" to justify increasing restrictions on residential shoreline properties. Teenagers are taught that the word "*science*" indicates any systematic, knowledge-based, practice that is capable of making a reliable and especially repeatable prediction of outcome. In Bainbridge Island SMP context, the qualifiers "*best available*" apparently do not necessarily indicate "excellent", "*good*" or even "*acceptable*".

During the numerous volunteer hours of SMP update committee work, there were many conscientiously informed opinions that questioned the applicability of most of the scientific buffer studies offered by consultants & ultimately used by the Planning Commission. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to carefully review the substantial criticisms within the SMP working groups related to buffer science. Of particular concern is that almost none of the buffer research concerns single family residential uses of shorelines. Most buffer research is about intensive polluting agricultural uses near fresh water streams where there are identifiable negative effects. Efficient, non-polluting septic or sewer systems are needed whether near shorelines or not. I believe that the reason there is so little research on buffers for residential land use near water is that there is not much evidence that any problem exists for which a buffer is a solution. There is even less scientific evidence that increased width buffers past some small minimum provides any appreciable additional shoreline protection.

Only in the final draft of SMP recommendations did the phrase "precautionary principle" get included as justification in the Planning Commission's transmittal letter to you. Perhaps that indicates that even the majority of the Planning Commission has acknowledged that the "*best available science*" is not very good, while it recommends that you should rely & act on it anyway. In other words, whether science supports it or not, existing shoreline restrictions in the Bainbridge SMP should be expanded because it *might* somehow be marginally beneficial to Puget Sound. That is the advisory opinion that you are now being asked to endorse & approve. Since no science has shown that existing SMP residential buffers are inadequate, it seems to me that no science can or will ever be used to show that increased buffers will be any more protective of Bainbridge Island shorelines.

Please do not confuse "*politics*" for "*science*" ... it is a disservice to both honorable disciplines. Thank you for your service to Bainbridge Island.